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# Inside Information

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## UPDATED ELECTRONIC MAIL DIRECTORY ISSUED

The list of agricultural communicators with mailboxes on USDA's electronic mail network provided by Dialcom Inc. has been updated and electronically distributed to all USDA, land grant university and state department of agriculture information offices on the network.

The latest directory contains more than 100 mailbox numbers and totals nearly three pages--a far cry from the first listing of about a dozen numbers in 5 USDA agencies a little over a year ago.

The August 1 listing includes information offices with 15 USDA agencies and offices, all except 2 land grant universities and some state departments of agriculture.

In addition, a number of other mailbox numbers are listed, such as the Food & Drug Administration, U. S. House of Representatives, national headquarters of ACE (Agricultural Communicators in Education) and some news media and newsletter publishers.

The listing is expected to grow as additional USDA agency information offices get mailboxes on the system and other related networks are established.

One possibility is that ACE has now established a network for all its officers and members, which could be accessed by anyone on the Dialcom system.

Another possibility is that NASDA (National Association of State Departments of Agriculture) may establish a network on the system. This would allow all state information offices to have access to the system.

And, several media, especially farm editors and broadcasters, and agricultural organizations are considering linking up with the system.

One point: The list does not include all the others, such as agency program administrators and specialists (which now number in the hundreds on the AGS and DAG electronic mail networks), only those directly involved in public information or communications work.

Anyone who would like to receive a printed copy of the latest electronic mail directory, may contact Nancy Bevis, Room 402-A, Office of Governmental & Public Affairs, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, (AGR001) or call (202) 447-7454.

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## ELECTRONICS TO REVOLUTIONIZE MARKETING

An Oklahoma State University marketing specialist predicts that electronic and satellite communication will revolutionize both domestic and international livestock marketing by the year 2000.

Clement E. Ward, associate professor and extension economist in marketing at OSU, made his "bold assertion" at the Livestock Marketing Congress '82 meeting in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, recently.

Satellite and microwave communication, he said, will allow the transfer of video tapes "taken previously at ranches or being taped live from central markets to be seen by buyers on their home televisions."

Buyers will have a computer terminal linked to their television and Ward asked the audience to "imagine a television channel devoted entirely" to livestock marketing.

Such a trading system would combine video tapes and verbal and written descriptions of the livestock.

Computer software "would execute contracts; wire transfer funds; collect, summarize and analyze trading information; adjust livestock inventory data and numerous other activities."

Ward also challenged those currently in the marketing sector to "evaluate the services they provide and their function in the future."

"Several innovative, aggressive firms are already identifying where they will fit into the new marketing systems being developed."

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## REMOTE SENSING OF AGRICULTURE IN EXHIBIT

An exhibit that shows how remote sensing from space helps agriculture is on display through August 27 at USDA's National Agricultural Library, located off the Washington Capital Beltway and U.S. Route 1 in Beltsville, Maryland.

Designers built the exhibit around "AGRISTARS" (Agriculture and Resources Inventory Surveys through Aerospace Remote Sensing), a joint effort of USDA, National Aeronautics & Space Administration, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration of the Department of Commerce and the U.S. Department of Interior.

The U.S. Agency for International Development is taking part as an observer and potential user in the future.

AgRISTARS is used in addressing national and international issues on supply, demand and competition for food and fiber. Purpose of the program is to test usefulness and cost of aerospace remote sensing data and the extent to which it can be integrated into existing or future USDA systems.

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## FROM "HARDWARE" to "THOUGHTWARE"

Massive layoffs in the nation's basic industries are focusing attention on an important shift in U.S. employment patterns.

"We are rapidly becoming less and less a nation of builders, and more and more a nation of thinkers and servers, says David L. Birch, director of Massachusetts Institute of Technology's program on regional change.

He calls the transformation a shift from a "hardware economy to a thoughtware economy."

Futurists have put it another way--the United States has moved from an agrarian society through an industrial phase to the new "information" society, or Alvin Toffler's "Third Wave."

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## COMPUTERS HIGHLIGHT OF MICHIGAN AG EXPO

Thousands of farmers at Michigan State University's "Ag Expo 82" recently learned it takes more than good weather and good land to succeed these days--computers and a college degree are needed as well.

The Expo, highlighted by MSU farm computer research and a newly developed farm information computer, offered a glimpse at the newest in agricultural technology from 335 farm equipment manufacturers in a show spread across 30 acres.

"We still have the image of the farmer in overalls, chewing grass and sitting on a fence. But that dude probably has a Ph.D in computer science," Bob Neumann, MSU agriculture information coordinator told a UPI reporter.

"In a decade, any large size farm will have a person sitting with a computer determining things for the farm," Neumann said.

MSU research includes the use of computers in every farm activity from pest detection to complex marketing and problem solving. Different units can be used to determine if animals are diseased, when and how much of a crop a farmer should sell and what changes are taking place in international and local food markets.

If used correctly, Neumann said, this system could save farmers a lot of money.

"If you're going to make the correct decision in a couple of years, you're going to have to know what's going on internationally and locally," he said. "By the end of the year, if we don't have a lot of converts to the system, we're going to have a lot of farmers out of business," Neumann told UPI.

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## COMPUTERIZED SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL COMING

This fall, COMTEX SCIENTIFIC will begin publication of what it expects will eventually be 22 electronic scientific journals.

Just what the journals will be like, apparently has not yet been decided.

But the prospect is really something, says Mason Miller, communications specialist with USDA's Cooperative State Research Service, who reports on this in his most recent "Research Information Letter."

Editorial board will review manuscripts and then have the manuscripts online in six to eight weeks. This compares to the usual year and a half or so to get something published in a printed journal.

On top of that, COMPTEX SCIENTIFIC proposes to pay the author \$100 as an honorarium.

"If all this works," Miller says, "it will have a lasting impact on scientific reporting, on journals, on scientists, on libraries--everyone connected with the science literature area."

COMPTEX, started last year, now is providing research reports in a number of fields using this same system by only reproducing reports on microfiche.

Online costs for retrieval from the computerized journals will be at \$90 a connect hour, which is not much different from many of the other information systems online now, Miller says.

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## USDA AG LIBRARY MARKS 20TH ANNIVERSARY

USDA's National Agricultural Library, largest U.S. government library after the Library of Congress and biggest of its kind in the free world, celebrated its 20th anniversary a few weeks ago.

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## CABLE TV ACQUIRING FOREIGN ACCENT

American television is acquiring a foreign accent.

As multichannel cable and satellite distribution systems flourish, more and more U.S. citizens can tune in the latest news, entertainment and advertising, from Europe, Asia and Latin America.

About 30 percent of the 80 million U.S. households with television sets have access to cable programming, and probably three-quarters of those can get such international fare.

The Spanish Information Network is the largest and most prosperous of America's international television services.

Primarily owned by Televisa, Mexico's largest private broadcaster, SIN offers round-the-clock Spanish-language programming to our nation's Hispanic community--America's fastest-growing ethnic group, according to the Census Bureau.

Through its over-the-air and cable affiliates, SIN can reach roughly three-quarters of the nation's estimated 20 million Hispanics.

Last June, SIN initiated a weeknightly network news program focusing on Hispanic issues.

Though it may be premature to say Marshall McLuhan's "global village" has arrived, experts say there's little question that major corporations are preparing for international television advertising.

One consultant says viewers will begin to see simple, nonverbal commercials that go heavy on the logo. Specific multinational corporations are already planning for it.

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## NEW WAVE OF COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY IN USE

The next wave of computer technology is already on television screens, terminal displays and in some Hollywood films: Computer graphics.

They've been around since the 1960s, but are only taking off now because microelectronics brought high quality color at low cost.

Advantages are clear: Graphs are easier to read than tables, help those not mathematically oriented to grasp tough data fast.

Graphics are more realistic, too, e.g. 3-D DNA molecule models.

Here is a rundown of future trends to expect in computer graphics:

...Standard color TV will be the most common display device.

...The price of graphics systems will continue to decline, and as it does, the number of applications will increase dramatically.

...Real three-dimensional displays will become fairly common, when laser-driven devices able to make holograms are introduced. Future movies in the "Star Wars" series will be made on videotape, with computer holograph effects.

...Switches and maybe even conventional keyboards will be out, replaced by a transparent touch panel mounted over a video screen.

Already, Walt Disney Productions' film, "Tron," is being hailed as the first of its kind by using unique optical effects and computer-generated imagery.

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INSIDE INFORMATION is published for distribution to public affairs and information staff members of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, its agencies, State Departments of Agriculture and Land Grant Universities. Any items, comments and inquiries should be addressed to Stan W. Prochaska, Assistant Public Affairs Director, Room 402-A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, to AGR002 on the Dialcom electronic mail system, or call (202) 447-7454.